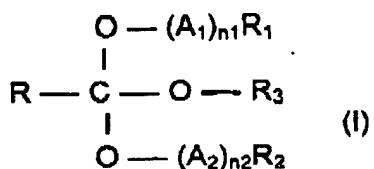


Listing of Claims:

1. (original) An ortho ester surfactant of the formula



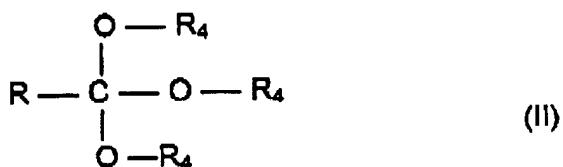
where R is hydrogen or an aliphatic group with 1-7 carbon atoms; R₁ is hydrogen or an alkyl group with 1-5 carbon atoms; A₁ is an alkyleneoxy group with 2-4 carbon atoms, the number of ethyleneoxy groups being at least 50% of the total number of alkyleneoxy groups; n₁ is a number between 1 and 30; R₂ is an aliphatic group with 5-22 carbon atoms; A₂ is an alkyleneoxy group with 3-4 carbon atoms; n₂ is a number between 0-30, provided that when R₂ is an aliphatic group with 5-6 carbon atoms n₂ is at least 1; R₃ is selected from the group consisting of (A₁)_{n_1}R₁, (A₂)_{n_2}R₂ and an alkyl group with 1-6 carbon atoms, where A₁, n₁, R₁, A₂, n₂ and R₂ have the same meaning as mentioned above; or a di- or polycondensate via any of the free hydroxy groups of the ortho ester.

2. (original) The ortho ester surfactant of claim 1, wherein R₁ is an alkyl group with 1-4 carbon atoms.

3. (original) The ortho ester surfactant of claim 1 wherein n₁ is a number between 2-25 and n₂ is a number between 0-20.

4. (original) The ortho ester surfactant of claim 1 wherein n₂ is 0, R₂ is an aliphatic group with 8-22 carbon atoms and A₁ is an ethyleneoxy group.

5. (withdrawn) A process for the preparation of the ortho ester surfactant of claims 1 which comprises reacting an ortho ester of the general formula



where R is hydrogen or an aliphatic group with 1-7 carbon atoms and R₄ is an alkyl group with 1-6 carbon atoms, in one or several steps, with reactants having the formulas HO(A₁)_{n₁}R₁ and HO(A₂)_{n₂}R₂, wherein R₁ is hydrogen or an alkyl group with 1-5 carbon atoms; R₂ is an aliphatic group with 5-22 carbon atoms; A₁ is an alkyleneoxy group with 3-4 carbon atoms; A₂ is an alkyleneoxy group with 2-4 carbon atoms, the number of ethyleneoxy groups being at least 50% of the total number of alkyleneoxy groups; n₁ is a number between 1 and 30; and n₂ is a number between 0-30, provided that when R₂ is an aliphatic group with 5-6 carbon atoms n₂ is at least 1, while evaporating alcohols with the formula R₄OH, where R₄ has the same meaning as above.

6. (original) An emulsifying agent which comprises at least one ortho ester of claims 1.

7. (previously presented) A dispersing agent that comprises at least one ortho ester of claims 1.

8. (previously presented) A cleaning or scouring composition that comprises the ortho ester of claim 1.

9. (withdrawn) A method of separating a hydrophobic component from an aqueous system that comprises

- a) emulsifying or dispersing said hydrophobic component in said aqueous system at a pH of 6 or above in the presence of an ortho ester in accordance with claim 1,
- b) lowering the pH or increasing the temperature of the emulsion or dispersion resulting from step a), or a combination thereof, and thereby breaking the emulsion or dispersion, and
- c) separating the hydrophobic component from the aqueous system.

10. (withdrawn) The method of claim 9 wherein the temperature in step b is raised to between 20 and 60°C.

11. (withdrawn) The method of claim 9 wherein the pH in step b is between 4 and 8.

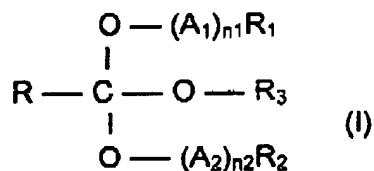
12. (withdrawn) A dyeing or deinking process that comprises the use of at least one ortho ester of claim 1.

13. (previously presented) A pesticidal formulation that comprises at least one ortho ester of claim 1.

14. (previously presented) An alkaline hard surface cleaner that comprises at least one ortho ester surfactant according to claim 1.

15. (withdrawn) A method for cleaning a hard surface contaminated with hydrophobic dirt which comprises applying to said surface an aqueous, alkaline hard surface cleaner according to claim 14 in an amount effective for said surfactant in said cleaner to disperse the dirt from said hard surface thereby forming an aqueous wastewater stream, followed by acidifying said wastewater stream thereby causing the hydrophobic dirt to separate from the aqueous phase.

16. (previously presented) An ortho ester surfactant of the formula



where R is hydrogen or an aliphatic group with 1-7 carbon atoms; R₁ is hydrogen or an alkyl group with 1-5 carbon atoms; A₁ is an alkyleneoxy group with 2-4 carbon atoms, the number of ethyleneoxy groups being at least 50% of the total number of alkyleneoxy groups; n₁ is a number between 1 and 30; R₂ is an aliphatic group with 5-22 carbon atoms; A₂ is an alkyleneoxy group with 3-4 carbon atoms; n₂ is a number between 0-30, provided that when R₂ is an aliphatic group with 5-6 carbon atoms n₂ is at least 1; R₃ is selected from the group consisting of (A₁)_{n_1}R₁, (A₂)_{n_2}R₂ and an alkyl group with 1-6 carbon atoms, where A₁, n₁, R₁, A₂, n₂ and R₂ have the same meaning as mentioned above; or a di- or polycondensate via any of the free hydroxy groups of the ortho ester, wherein said ortho ester surfactant is prepared in accordance with the process of claim 5.